**How do dress codes influence Sexism and gender stereotypes?**

1. Editorial

Sullivan, G. (2014, September 5). New kid at school forced to wear 'shame suit' for dress

code violation. Retrieved December 1, 2014, from

http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/09/05/new-kid-at

school-forced-to-wear-shame-suit-for-dress-code-violation/

At Oakleaf High School in Clay County, Florida, student Miranda Larkin was forced to wear what is known as the “shame suit,” due to a dress code violation. At Oakleaf High School, the dress code says that girls may not wear skirts that are more than 3 inches above the knee. When Miranda showed up to school in a skirt that was closer to 4 inches above her knee, she was sent to the nurse’s office and told to put on an oversized yellow shirt that read “dress code violation” across the front as well as large red sweatpants. After humiliated Amanda broke down in tears, her mother threatened to take legal action because she believed that her daughter’s privacy was violated when she was forced to wear an outfit that put her disciplinary actions on display for the entire school to see.

I was shocked to read this article and learn that such a thing as the “shame suit” actually exists. I do understand that dress codes in schools are expected to be followed, but I agree that it is a violation of privacy and just flat out humiliating to force a student to wear something like Miranda had to wear. I believe that this article serves as an example of how girls are especially targeted when it comes to violating school dress codes even by the slightest inch. Based on my own personal experiences, this is something that is present not only in this article, but in Rhode Island schools as well. I think that it is something to be aware of and work towards fixing because there are other ways to enforce dress codes and discipline students for violating them without publicly humiliating them.

1. Analysis Article from Magazine

Orenstein, P. (2014, June 13). The Battle Over Dress Codes. Retrieved December 1,

2014, from http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/14/opinion/the-battle-over-dress

codes.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias:s&\_r=0

This article discusses the concept of the contemporary dress code, and how it is affecting students and their parents; parents are expected to measure the skirt lengths and tank top widths of their daughters. The author touches on a time in history when dress codes were this dramatic: in the 1970s, boys with long hair were bullied and blamed for being bullied because they chose to have long hair and attract attention to themselves. This is compared to how girls today are expected to dress in a way that is not distracting to boys, instead of boys being expected to control themselves. Furthermore, this expectation of females to cover up potentially discourages, causing them to be ashamed of their bodies and leading them to view themselves as sexual objects. In the conclusion of the article, the author touches on how her own daughter’s school in California plans to educate students on the sexualization of both girls and boys, so as to prevent it.

I found the perspectives covered in this article to be very relatable to the research question I created. Many of the articles that I found discussed solely the effects of dress codes on women, which makes sense because women are most often negatively affected by dress codes. However, this article discussed dress codes and their effect on boys as well, slightly comparing the two to each other. I especially resonated with this article because of the personal details the author shared about the actions being taken in her own daughter’s school. I feel like the kind of actions being taken in the author’s daughter’s school could greatly benefit schools in Rhode Island.

1. Scholarly

Dockterman, E. (2014, January 1). When Enforcing School Dress Codes Turns Into Slut

Shaming. Retrieved December 1, 2014, from

http://web.b.ebscohost.com.uri.idm.oclc.org/ehost/detail/detail?sid=d0e3babc-

3683-4253-9848-913802518cb6%40sessionmgr115&vid=0&hid=116&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=95294328

In Illinois, girls are taking a stand and protesting after leggings were banned from their school because they were “too distracting to boys.” Furthermore, female students share their stories about how they were asked to change their outfit due to dress code violations, while other girls in violation of the dress code were not. The author suggests that this discrepancy in school dress code enforcement is potentially due to girls’ varying body types. Like previous articles, this article further elaborates the idea that girls should not have to be so cautious of what they wear in order to avoid distracting boys, but boys should learn to control their sexual urges.

This article was one of my favorites relating to the topic of “slut-shaming,” because it is something that I have personally experienced in Rhode Island Schools. I believe the author did a good job distinguishing between enforcing a school dress code and shaming girls for having certain body types. When I was in high school, there were incidents when school administrators called out other girls for wearing clothes that were too short or too low cut, whereas I was not scolded for wearing the same things. Discrimination against females, especially girls who are curvier and more developed than others, while enforcing dress codes is something that undoubtedly happens often.

1. Scholarly

Dockterman, E. (2014, January 1). Schools Are Still Slut-Shaming Girls While Enforcing

Dress Code. Retrieved December 1, 2014, from

http://web.b.ebscohost.com.uri.idm.oclc.org/ehost/detail/detail?sid=714c42c0-

f9ef-4bbf-9207-

1bd0c9728c6e%40sessionmgr110&vid=0&hid=116&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3

QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=98399758

This article discusses yet another slut-shaming controversy in New York, where leggings were banned at Tottenville High School. The author points out that dress code regulations for females are far more sexually based than they are for boys. Girls are encouraged to cover up as much of their skin as possible, and the same is not true for boys. One major point that the author makes it that telling girls that dressing inappropriately is distracting for boys makes girls feel guilty for boys’ actions.

The idea that the author presented about girls feeling guilty for boys’ actions is something that I feel is very relevant today, not only in Rhode Island Schools, but in society as a whole. It is unsettling to know that if a boy acts out in a sexually inappropriate way towards a girl who is dressed “provocatively,” she is very likely to be blamed for his actions. A teacher abusing their right to enforce school dress codes, especially while slut-shaming girls, is something that everyone should be more aware of just in case they ever become a victim.

1. Reputable Database

Bowman, D., & Bushweller, K. (2014, January 1). Dress codes target risqué styles.

Retrieved December 1, 2014, from

http://web.b.ebscohost.com.uri.idm.oclc.org/ehost/detail/detail?sid=39e58050-

8774-48be-a790-

ffffb963c49c%40sessionmgr110&vid=0&hid=116&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3Qt

bGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=eft&AN=507708975

This article is a summary of expert opinions regarding the effects of school dress codes on specifically female students. The authors speak about how dress codes have evolved over time to target mostly girls. This is perhaps because girls have more clothing options than do boys. Additionally, this topic of dress code paired with gender has caused many legal issues, which usually end with the court in favor of dress codes and clothing restrictions.

I chose this article because I believe that, as legal issues regarding dress codes have become more and more prevalent, it is important to understand the importance of addressing the issue of dress codes in relation to gender stereotypes and sexism. This relates to Rhode Island schools, and all schools in general for that matter, because these potential legal issues affect many students, especially females. Learning more about potential legal issues can possibly help to prevent them.